

*Citation for published version:*

Cosham, SD, Hill, MS, Johnson, AL & Molloy, KC 2014, 'New organo- and amidozinc derivatives of primary amines', *Dalton Transactions*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 859-864. <https://doi.org/10.1039/c3dt52602j>

*DOI:*

[10.1039/c3dt52602j](https://doi.org/10.1039/c3dt52602j)

*Publication date:*

2014

*Document Version*

Early version, also known as pre-print

[Link to publication](#)

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Cite this: DOI: 10.1039/c0xx00000x

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ARTICLE TYPE

## New Organo- and Amino zinc Derivatives of Primary Amines

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Received (in XXX, XXX) Xth XXXXXXXXX 200X, Accepted Xth XXXXXXXXX 200X

DOI: 10.1039/b000000x

Five new zinc derivatives of primary amines  $[R'ZnN(H)R]_2$  [ $R = SiPh_3$ ,  $R' = Me$  (**1**),  $N(SiMe_3)_2$  (**4**);  $R = Si(NMe_2)_3$ ,  $R' = Me$  (**2**),  $Et$  (**3**),  $N(SiMe_3)_2$  (**5**)] have been synthesised by reaction of  $R'_2Zn$  and  $H_2NR$ . All five species are dimers in which the N-H groups are disposed in a *trans* manner about a central  $Zn_2N_2$  ring. In **1** and **4** the coordination at zinc is trigonal planar, while in **2**, **3**, **5** the zinc is in a distorted tetrahedral environment due to additional  $Me_2N: \rightarrow Zn$  coordination from one  $SiNMe_2$  group. **5** was found to be generally resistant to NH deprotonation by bases such as  $MN(SiMe_3)_2$  ( $M = Li, K$ ) or  $Zn[N(SiMe_3)_2]_2$ , but reacts with  $Sn[N(SiMe_3)_2]_2$  to give the tin-free, tetrameric mixed zinc-imido/amido species,  $\{[(Me_3Si)_2N]\{(Me_2N)_3SiN(H)\}\{(Me_2N)_3SiN\}Zn_2\}_2$  (**6**) which can be viewed as part of a hexameric  $Zn_6N_6$  drum which has lost a  $Zn_2N_2$  ring.

## Introduction

The first zinc amide,  $Zn(NEt_2)_2$ , was synthesised by Frankland in 1856,<sup>1</sup> since when the reaction of zinc complexes with secondary amines has been systematically investigated in great detail.<sup>2</sup> In comparison, studies into the reaction of organozinc reagents with primary amines are far less extensive.<sup>3</sup> The direct reaction of several primary amines  $RNH_2$  ( $R = ^iBu$ ,<sup>3a</sup>  $Ph$ ,<sup>3a</sup>  $Me$ ,<sup>3a</sup>  $naphthyl$ ,<sup>3b</sup>  $adamantyl$ ,<sup>3c</sup>  $iPr_3Si$ <sup>3c,4</sup>) with  $R_2Zn$  (most commonly, but not exclusively,<sup>3a,4</sup> the commercially available reagents  $ZnMe_2$  and  $ZnEt_2$ ) with the subsequent elimination of alkane have been explored, resulting in either monomeric, dimeric or trimeric variants on  $[R'ZnN(H)R]_n$  determined by the steric demand of the substituents bonded to the zinc and nitrogen atoms. In none of these examples has the further deprotonation of the amide and subsequent formation of zinc imido complexes been observed, even under forcing conditions. Interestingly, within similar zincated primary phosphane and arsane complexes,  $[R'ZnE(H)R]_2$  ( $E = P, As$ ), the increased acidic nature of the E-H bond results in the self-condensation of the complex and subsequent formation of bridging phosphanediide and arsanediide species.<sup>4-5</sup>

Interest in this general area is now driven by the continued requirement for volatile zinc compounds for use in chemical vapour deposition (CVD) processes, where the presence of N-H bonds in the precursor may aid the decomposition process.<sup>3d</sup> Furthermore, in addition to acting as precursor for the deposition of widely exploited n-type  $ZnO$ ,<sup>6</sup> systems with a high nitrogen content may lead to nitrogen doping and a switch to p-type behaviour or, conceivably, deposition of the nitride  $Zn_3N_2$ . Indeed, oxidation of  $Zn_3N_2$  has been reported as a viable route to p-type  $ZnO$  by N-doping.<sup>7</sup> In this paper we report the synthesis and characterisation of further examples of  $R'ZnN(H)R$  [ $R' = Me$ ,

$R = SiPh_3$ ,  $Si(NMe_2)_3$ ;  $R' = Et$ ,  $R = Si(NMe_2)_3$ ], the novel species  $(Me_3Si)_2NZN(H)R$  [ $R = SiPh_3$ ,  $Si(NMe_2)_3$ ], along with our attempts to elaborate these species further by reaction of the residual N-H unit, leading to the formation of the unprecedented imido-containing tetrameric species  $Zn_4[N(SiMe_3)_2]_2[N-Si(NMe_2)_3]_2[N(H)Si(NMe_2)_3]_2$  (**6**).

## Experimental

## General Information:

All operations were performed under an atmosphere of dry argon using standard Schlenk line and glovebox techniques. Hexanes and toluene solvents were dried using a commercially available solvent purification system (Innovative Technology Inc.) and degassed under argon prior to use. Deuterated benzene ( $C_6D_6$ ) Toluene ( $d_8$ -Toluene) and THF ( $d_8$ -THF) NMR solvents were purchased from Fluorochem and dried over potassium before isolating *via* vacuum distillation. All dry solvents were stored under argon in Young's ampoules over 4 Å molecular sieves. 2 M Dimethylzinc ( $ZnMe_2$ ) and 1 M diethylzinc ( $ZnEt_2$ ) solutions were prepared accordingly from the neat reagent, supplied by SAFC HiTech.  $[Ph_3SiNH_2]$ ,<sup>8</sup>  $[(Me_2N)_3SiNH_2]$ ,<sup>9</sup>  $[Zn\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}_2]$ ,<sup>10</sup> and  $[Sn\{N(SiMe_3)_2\}_2]$ <sup>11</sup> were prepared according to published procedures.

All solution state  $^1H$  and  $^{13}C\{^1H\}$  NMR spectra obtained at ambient temperature (25 °C) were recorded with a Bruker Avance 300 spectrometer, whilst  $^{29}Si$  NMR spectra were recorded using a Bruker Avance 500 spectrometer. VT-NMR experiments were performed in  $d_8$ -Toluene using a Bruker Avance 400 spectrometer.  $^1H$  and  $^{13}C$  NMR chemical shifts are given in ppm and referenced internally to residual non-deuterated solvent resonances.<sup>12</sup> The following abbreviations are used: s (singlet), t (triplet), q (quartet), m (multiplet) and br (broad). Elemental analyses were

performed externally by London Metropolitan University Elemental Analysis Service, UK.

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{Ph})_3]_2$  (1):**  $\text{Ph}_3\text{SiNH}_2$  (1.38 g, 5 mmol) was dissolved in hexanes (20 mL), then treated with a 2 M toluene solution of  $\text{ZnMe}_2$  (2.5 mL, 5 mmol). The reaction solution was stirred at ambient temperature for 24 h, forming a white precipitate. Volatiles were then removed *in vacuo*. Slow recrystallization of the residue from hexanes at ambient temperature gave the product as colourless crystals. Yield: 1.05 g, 59%.  $\text{C}_{19}\text{H}_{19}\text{NSiZn}$  (354.83): calcd C 64.34, H 5.36, N 3.95; found C 64.74, H 5.38, N 3.95.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 7.74 - 7.63$  (br m, 6 H,  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ),  $7.34 - 7.16$  (br m, 9 H,  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ),  $0.01$  (s, 1 H, NH),  $-0.31$  (s, 3 H,  $\text{ZnCH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 138.5, 138.1, 130.5, 126.1$  ( $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ),  $-9.2$  ( $\text{ZnCH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = -11.9$ .

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{Me}_2\text{N})(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3]_2$  (2):** A solution of  $(\text{Me}_2\text{N})_3\text{SiNH}_2$  (0.88 g, 5 mmol) in hexanes (10 mL) was treated with a 2 M toluene solution of  $\text{ZnMe}_2$  (2.5 mL, 5 mmol). The reaction solution was stirred at ambient temperature for 24 h and then volatiles were removed *in vacuo*. Crystallisation of the residue from hexanes at  $-28^\circ\text{C}$  gave the product as colourless crystals. Yield: 0.78 g, 61%.  $\text{C}_7\text{H}_{22}\text{N}_4\text{SiZn}$  (255.74): calcd C 32.89, H 8.61, N 21.93; found C 32.76, H 8.48, N 21.26.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 2.45$  (s, 18 H,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $0.16$  (s, 1 H, NH),  $-0.25$  (s, 3 H,  $\text{ZnCH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 38.6$  ( $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $-12.6$  ( $\text{ZnCH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = -28.7$ .

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{EtZnN}(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3]_2$  (3):** A solution of  $(\text{Me}_2\text{N})_3\text{SiNH}_2$  (0.35 g, 2 mmol) in hexanes (10 mL) was slowly treated with a 1 M solution of  $\text{ZnEt}_2$  (2 mL, 2 mmol) in hexanes. The reaction was stirred at ambient temperature for 24 h and volatiles were then removed *in vacuo*. Crystallisation of the residue from toluene at  $-28^\circ\text{C}$  gave the product as colourless crystals. Yield: 0.20 g, 37%.  $\text{C}_8\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_4\text{SiZn}$  (269.77): calcd C 35.62, H 8.97, N 20.77; found C 35.51, H 9.13, N 20.66.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 2.48$  (s, 18 H,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $1.60$  (t, 3 H,  $\text{ZnCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ,  $^3J_{\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3} = 8.1$  Hz),  $0.64$  (q, 2 H,  $\text{ZnCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ,  $^3J_{\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_3} = 8.1$  Hz),  $0.16$  (s, 1 H, NH).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 38.7$  ( $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $13.0$  ( $\text{ZnCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ),  $1.83$  ( $\text{ZnCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = -28.9$ .

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{Ph})_3]_2$  (4):**  $\text{Ph}_3\text{SiNH}_2$  (0.55 g, 2 mmol) was dissolved in hexanes (10 mL), then treated with a solution of  $\text{Zn}[\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2]_2$  (0.77 g, 2 mmol) in hexanes (10 mL). The reaction solution was stirred at ambient temperature for 24 h, forming a white precipitate. Volatiles were then removed *in vacuo*. Recrystallization of the residue from toluene at  $-28^\circ\text{C}$  gave the product as colourless crystals. Yield: 0.31 g, 31%.  $\text{C}_{24}\text{H}_{34}\text{N}_2\text{Si}_3\text{Zn}$  (500.18): calcd C 57.63, H 6.85, N 5.60; found C 57.77, H 6.67, N 5.45.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{d}_8$ -THF):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 7.66 - 7.02$  (br m, 15 H,  $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ),  $0.13 - 0.05$  (m, 13 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ),  $-0.03 - -0.18$  (br m, 3 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ),  $-0.19 - -0.36$  (br s, 2 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{d}_8$ -THF):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 140.3, 136.6, 136.3, 129.9, 129.5, 128.4, 128.3$  ( $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5$ ),  $5.7$  ( $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz,  $\text{d}_8$ -THF):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = -5.0$  ( $\text{SiMe}_3$ ),  $-16.1$  ( $\text{SiPh}_3$ ).

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3]_2$  (5):** A solution of  $(\text{Me}_2\text{N})_3\text{SiNH}_2$  (0.71 g, 4 mmol) in hexanes (6 mL) was treated with a solution of  $\text{Zn}[\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2]_2$  (1.54 g, 4 mmol) in hexanes (6 mL). The reaction solution was stirred at ambient temperature for 24 h, forming a white precipitate. The volume of the reaction solution was partially reduced *in vacuo* and the precipitate redissolved with gentle heating. Crystallisation from the reaction solution at  $5^\circ\text{C}$  gave the product as colourless crystals. Yield: 1.07 g, 67%.  $\text{C}_{12}\text{H}_{37}\text{N}_5\text{Si}_3\text{Zn}$  (401.09): calcd C 35.93, H 9.30, N 17.46; found C 35.82, H 9.45, N 17.55.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (300 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 2.55$  (s, 6 H,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $2.50$  (s, 12 H,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $0.25$  (s, 3 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ),  $0.24$  (s, 12 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ),  $0.19$  (s, 3 H,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 39.2$  ( $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $5.6$  ( $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = -3.9$  ( $\text{SiMe}_3$ ),  $-28.1$  ( $\text{SiNMe}_2$ ).

**Synthesis of  $[(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{N}]\{(\text{Me}_2\text{N})_3\text{SiN}(\text{H})\}\{(\text{Me}_2\text{N})_3\text{SiN}\}\text{Zn}_2$  (6):** A solution of **5** (0.40 g, 0.5 mmol) in hexanes (10 mL) was treated with a solution of  $\text{Sn}[\text{N}(\text{SiMe}_3)_2]_2$  (0.22 g, 0.5 mmol) in hexanes (10 mL). The reaction solution was stirred for 72 h, and volatiles were then removed *in vacuo*. Crystallisation of the residue from hexanes at  $-28^\circ\text{C}$  gave the product as small, off-white crystals. Yield: 0.03 g, 9%.  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (500 MHz,  $\text{d}_8$ -toluene):  $\delta_{\text{H}} = 2.94 - 2.35$  (br m,  $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $0.65 - 0.16$  (br m,  $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{13}\text{C}$   $\{^1\text{H}\}$  NMR (75.5 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{C}} = 39.5, 39.0, 38.7$  ( $\text{NCH}_3$ ),  $6.4, 5.2, 2.6, 1.4$  ( $\text{SiCH}_3$ ).  $^{29}\text{Si}$  (99.35 MHz,  $\text{C}_6\text{D}_6$ ):  $\delta_{\text{Si}} = 2.4, -0.6$  ( $\text{SiMe}_3$ ),  $-20.2, -27.8, -31.1$  ( $\text{SiNMe}_2$ ).

## Crystallography

Experimental details relating to the single-crystal X-ray crystallographic studies are summarised in Table 1. For all structures, data were collected on a Nonius Kappa CCD diffractometer at 150(2) K using Mo- $\text{K}\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda = 0.71073$  Å). Structure solution was followed by full-matrix least squares refinement and was performed using the WinGX-1.70 suite of programmes.<sup>13</sup> Specific details: **1** contains two independent molecules and one molecule of toluene in the asymmetric unit; **4** also contains a molecule of toluene disordered over two positions.

## Results and Discussion

### Synthesis and Structures

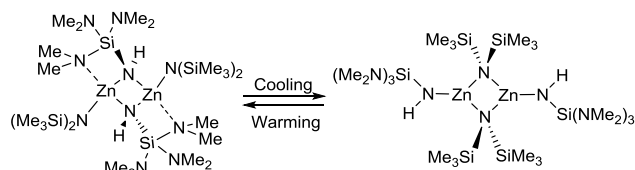
New alkylzinc amido complexes  $\text{R}'\text{Zn}(\text{NH})\text{R}$  [ $\text{R}' = \text{Me}$ ,  $\text{R} = \text{SiPh}_3$  (**1**),  $\text{R}' = \text{Me}$ ,  $\text{R} = \text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3$  (**2**);  $\text{R}' = \text{Et}$ ,  $\text{R} = \text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3$  (**3**)] have been prepared by reaction of  $\text{RNH}_2$  and  $\text{R}'_2\text{Zn}$  in hexane. Similarly,  $(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{N}(\text{H})\text{R}$  [ $\text{R} = \text{SiPh}_3$  (**4**),  $\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3$  (**5**)] have been prepared analogously starting from  $(\text{Me}_3\text{Si})_2\text{Zn}$  (Eqn 1):



Complexes **1–5** are colourless air-sensitive solids, soluble in common organic solvents; yields were in the range 31 – 67%. Despite numerous attempts to substitute the remaining  $\text{R}'$  group (1:2 reaction stoichiometry, excess amine, reflux, change of solvent to either THF or toluene), only mono-substituted

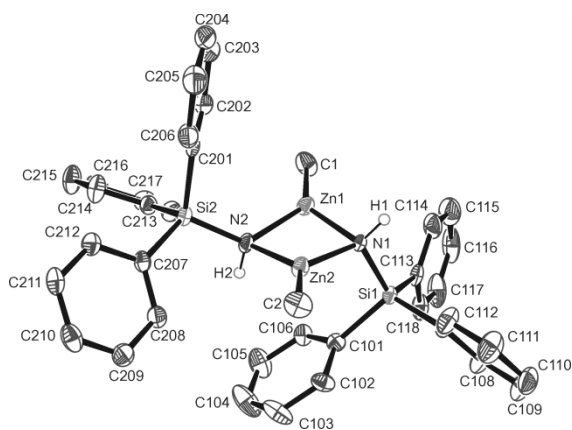
R'ZnN(H)R species, could be isolated.

The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra of **1-3** each display the expected resonances attributed to the substituents bonded to the silicon atoms (Ph or  $\text{NMe}_2$ ). Additionally the spectra show a single resonance [ $\delta = -0.31$  (**1**),  $-0.25$  (**2**),  $0.64$  ppm (**3**)] that may be assigned to a methyl or methylene group bonded to the zinc atom, along with a broad singlet [ $\delta = 0.01$  (**1**),  $0.16$  (**2**),  $0.16$  ppm (**3**)] that may be attributed to the remaining NH proton. Integration of these resonances show the  $\{\text{R}_3\text{Si}\}$ ,  $\{\text{ZnMe/Et}\}$  and  $\{\text{NH}\}$  moieties are present in a 1:1:1 ratio, consistent with the formation of a zinc amide with the empirical formula  $\text{Me/Et-ZnN(H)SiR}_3$  rather than a zinc imido species. In the case of **2**, the  $\text{NMe}_2$  groups all appear to be equivalent, despite this not being the case in the solid state (see below). The spectra are more complex for the more sterically encumbered **4** and **5**. The  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum of **4** has a complex multiplet of signals corresponding to the four  $\text{Me}_3\text{Si}$  groups, while the N-H signal is not observed. The  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR has only a singlet for the associated carbon centres. It appears that the hydrogen atoms of these groups become non-equivalent due to restricted rotation in this congested molecule.

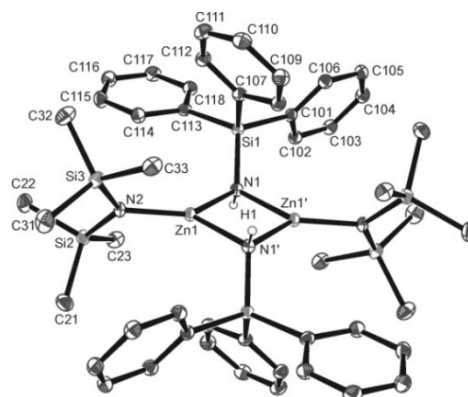


**Scheme 1** Proposed species that exist in equilibrium for complex **5**.

At 298 K, the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectra of **5** shows two signals for the  $\text{NMe}_2$  groups in 2:1 ratio consistent with the solid state structure incorporating the  $\mu\text{-(NMe}_2\text{)Si(NMe}_2\text{)}_2$  moiety; there is also some non-equivalence to the  $\text{Me}_3\text{Si}$  groups (three signals in 4:1:1 ratio) consistent with hindered rotation of these groups. Again, the N-H resonance is not observed within the  $^1\text{H}$  NMR spectrum.



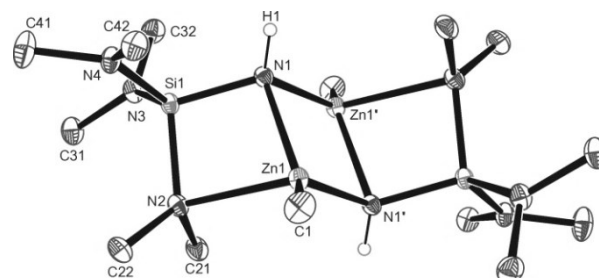
**Fig. 1** The structure of **1** showing the labelling scheme used in the text; thermal ellipsoids are at the 40% probability level. C(107) and C(218) are hidden behind C(112) and Si(2), respectively. Only one of two molecules in the asymmetric unit is shown; a co-crystallised molecule of toluene has also been omitted for clarity. Selected geometric data: Zn(1)-N(1) 2.015(4), Zn(1)-N(2) 2.048(4), Zn(2)-N(1) 2.036(4), Zn(2)-N(2) 2.037(4), Si(1)-N(1) 1.733(4), Si(2)-N(2) 1.726(4) Å; Zn(1)-N(1)-Zn(2) 89.40(15), Zn(1)-N(2)-Zn(2) 88.47(16), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(2) 89.77(16), N(1)-Zn(2)-N(2) 89.48(15), N(1)-Zn(1)-C(1), 136.6(2), N(2)-Zn(1)-C(1) 133.1(2), N(1)-Zn(2)-C(2) 134.5(2), N(2)-Zn(2)-C(2) 136.0(2), Zn(1)-N(1)-Si(1) 115.97(19), Zn(2)-N(1)-Si(1) 112.71(19) °.



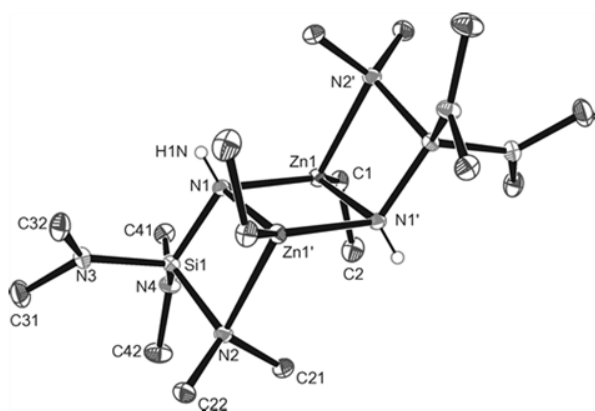
**Fig. 2** The structure of **4** showing the labelling scheme used in the text; thermal ellipsoids are at the 40% probability level. A co-crystallised molecule of disordered toluene has also been omitted for clarity. Selected geometric data: Zn(1)-N(1) 2.0228(17), Zn(1)-N(1') 2.0371(17), Zn(1)-N(2) 1.8873(16), N(1)-Si(1) 1.7480(18), N(2)-Si(4) 1.7208(17), N(2)-Si(2) 1.7124(18) Å, N(1)-Zn(1)-N(2) 132.27(7), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(1') 91.79(7), N(2)-Zn(1)-N(1') 135.94(7)°, Si(1)-N(1)-Zn(1) 119.30(10), Si(1)-N(1)-Zn(1') 119.18(10), Zn(1)-N(1)-Zn(1') 88.21(7) °. Symmetry operation: 1-x, 1-y, 1-z.

However, on cooling a sample of **5** to 218 K, far from resolving these different environments, the  $^1\text{H}$  spectrum simplifies (singlets at  $\delta$  ca 2.56, 0.38 ppm) which are contrary to the observed solid-state structure. We have no unambiguous rationale for this observation, but suggest that an alternative structure involving  $\mu_2\text{-N(SiMe}_3\text{)}_2$  and terminal  $\text{N(H)Si(NMe}_2\text{)}_3$  groups may exist at low temperature (Scheme 1), as is the case for  $[\text{t-BuZnN(SiMe}_3\text{)}_2]_2$ <sup>14</sup> and  $[\text{C}_6\text{F}_5\text{ZnN(SiMe}_3\text{)}_2]_2$ <sup>14</sup>.

The structures of **1-5** are shown in Figures 1 – 5 and all five species are dimeric in nature. Both **1** (Figure 1) and **4** (Figure 2) adopt structures in which R(H)N groups bridge zinc centres, with the bulky  $\text{Ph}_3\text{Si}$  groups disposed in an anti-manner about the central  $\text{Zn}_2\text{N}_2$  ring. The structures are analogous to  $[\text{R}'\text{ZnN(H)Si}^i\text{Pr}_3]_2$  (R = Me, Et)<sup>3c</sup> in embodying a three-coordinate, trigonal planar metal centre geometry, with no further coordination by either free amine<sup>3c, 3d</sup> or solvent, which is common for reactions carried out in donor solvents such as THF.<sup>3a, 3b</sup>

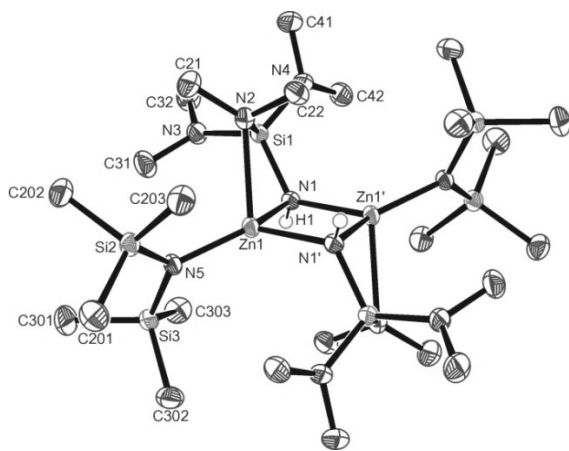


**Fig. 3** The structure of **2** showing the labelling scheme used in the text; thermal ellipsoids are at the 35% probability level. Selected geometric data: Zn(1)-N(1) 2.1422(14), Zn(1)-N(1') 2.0165(13), Zn(1)-N(2) 2.3377(14), Si(1)-N(1) 1.7023(14), Si(1)-N(2) 1.7769(15), Si(1)-N(3) 1.7056(14), Si(1)-N(4) 1.7131(14) Å; C(1)-Zn(1)-N(1), 131.24(7), C(1)-Zn(1)-N(1') 131.37(7), C(1)-Zn(1)-N(2) 111.19(8), N(1')-Zn(1)-N(2) 103.02(5), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(2) 73.23(5), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(1') 90.65(5), Zn(1')-N(1)-Si(1) 121.21(8), Zn(1)-N(1)-Si(1) 93.82(6), Zn(1)-N(1)-Zn(1') 89.35(5), Zn(1)-N(2)-Si(1) 85.52(5), Zn(1)-N(2)-C(21) 106.73(12), Zn(1)-N(2)-C(22) 112.91(13), Si(1)-N(2)-C(21) 118.57(12), Si(1)-N(2)-C(22) 119.48(12), C(21)-N(2)-C(22) 110.25(14) °. Symmetry operation: 1-x, 1-y, z.



**Fig. 4.** The structure of **3** showing the labelling scheme used in the text; thermal ellipsoids are at the 40% probability level. Selected geometric data: Zn(1)-N(1) 2.0208(15), Zn(1)-N(1') 2.1327(16), Zn(1)-N(2') 2.3425(15), Si(1)-N(1) 1.7039(16), Si(1)-N(2) 1.7795(15), Si(1)-N(3) 1.7129(16), Si(1)-N(4) 1.7111(17) Å; C(1)-Zn(1)-N(1) 131.76(7), C(1)-Zn(1)-N(1') 130.10(7), C(1)-Zn(1)-N(2') 112.40(7), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(1') 90.65(6), N(1)-Zn(1)-N(2') 102.31(6), N(1')-Zn(1)-N(2') 73.48(6), Si(1)-N(1)-Zn(1) 119.24(9), Si(1)-N(1)-Zn(1') 94.37(7), Zn(1)-N(1)-Zn(1') 89.35(6)°. Symmetry operation: 1-x,-y,-z.

The Zn-N bonds to the bridging nitrogen atoms are typical of those involved in  $\text{Zn}_2\text{N}_2$  rings reported in the Cambridge Crystallographic Database (1.997 Å - 2.109 Å),<sup>15</sup> and are longer [2.015(4) - 2.0371(17) Å] than the exocyclic Zn-N bond in **4** [1.8873(16) Å]. In contrast, **2** (Figure 3), **3** (Figure 4) and **5** (Figure 5), each of which incorporate the  $\text{N}(\text{H})\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3$  ligand, are dimeric but embody four-coordinated zinc atoms by virtue of both  $\mu_2\text{-N}(\text{H})\text{R}$  and  $\mu_2\text{-NMe}_2$  moieties; the bulky  $\text{Si}(\text{NMe}_2)_3$  groups are, as in **1**, **2**, in an *anti*-arrangement with respect to the central  $\text{Zn}_2\text{N}_2$  ring.



The outer two rings are thus *syn* with respect to the central ring, so overall the structure can be viewed as a fragment of Zn<sub>6</sub>N<sub>6</sub> hexagonal drum with one Zn<sub>2</sub>N<sub>2</sub> face missing. This is in contrast to the three fused rings in Zn<sub>4</sub>Et<sub>2</sub>(NHR)<sub>4</sub>(OEt)<sub>2</sub> (R = 2,6-<sup>5</sup>Pr<sub>2</sub>C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>3</sub>)<sup>3a</sup> in which the two ZnOZnN rings are *anti* with respect to the central Zn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> ring, generating a staircase structure. There are two distinct zinc centres in **6**, namely trigonal planar three-coordinate Zn(2) and four-coordinated Zn(1) which has a distorted tetrahedral array of ligands. The imido nitrogen has a  $\mu_3$ -Zn<sub>3</sub> bonding mode with one short [Zn(2)-N(1) 1.9382(19) Å] and two longer [Zn(1)-N(1) 2.0487(19), Zn(1')-N(1) 2.0979(19) Å] bonds to zinc. The  $\mu_2$ -N(H)R group [N(5)] forms two bonds to zinc of similar strength and comparable to those formed by  $\mu_3$ -N(1) [2.0164(19), 2.1121(19) Å], while the longest and shortest Zn-N bonds are formed by the  $\mu_2$ -NMe<sub>2</sub> group [Zn(1')-N(2) 2.141(2) Å] and the terminal N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> group [Zn(2)-N(9) 1.917(2) Å], respectively. There are distinct Si-N bonds, ranging from the shortest involving the imido nitrogen [N(1)-Si(1) 1.681(2) Å] to the longest based on bridging N(2) [N(2)-Si-Si(1) 1.843(2) Å] and spanning the remaining, more typical Si-N bond lengths [1.708(3) – 1.731(2) Å]. The terminal N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub> groups are bonded to Zn(2) at the outer edges of the array, while the two remaining N-H groups [N(5)-H(5)] are too crowded to participate in any hydrogen bonding. Indeed, the crowding of these two functionalities is probably the reason why formation of the hexameric drum structure, typified by (iPrNAIH)<sub>6</sub><sup>17</sup> or [PhNMg(THF)]<sub>6</sub>,<sup>18</sup> is incomplete.

The NMR data for **6** reflect the asymmetry in the species. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR signals for both the Me<sub>3</sub>Si and Me<sub>2</sub>N environments are broad and featureless, which reflects both the extent of non-equivalent environments and possible fluxionality. Similarly, the <sup>13</sup>C NMR has 4 signals for the Me<sub>3</sub>Si carbons and signals for two non-equivalent Me<sub>3</sub>Si environments in the <sup>29</sup>Si NMR, while the

complexity of the SiNMe<sub>2</sub> environments is reflected in four <sup>13</sup>C and three <sup>29</sup>Si NMR resonances. Additional peaks in the spectra can be attributed to residual **5** in the reaction mixture, which could not be completely removed from samples of **6**, a feature which is reflected in the poor elemental analysis of **6**: attempts to separate peaks for **5** and **6** using DOSY NMR experiments proved unsuccessful.

## Conclusions

The synthesis of zinc (amido) complexes have been accomplished through protonolysis of either dialkyl-zinc or diamino-zinc starting materials with primary silyl-amide proligands. Despite successive attempts to force these complexes to undergo a double deprotonation of the amide proligand, zinc-imido species were not formed. In attempts to react the remaining N-H bond in these species to form bimetallic species, complex **5**, was treated the metal amides M[N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>] (M = Li, K) or excess Zn[N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub>, but only starting materials could be isolated from these reactions. Remarkably, reaction of **5** with Sn[N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub> affords the unprecedented mixed amino-imido tetramer species Zn<sub>4</sub>[N(SiMe<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>]<sub>2</sub>[N-Si(NMe<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>]<sub>2</sub>[N(H)Si(NMe<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>]<sub>2</sub> (**6**), albeit in very low yield (9%), in which the imido ligand has a  $\mu_2$ -bridging role and  $\kappa^2$ -N,NMe<sub>2</sub> chelating coordination role. To the best of our knowledge, complex **6** represents the first zinc-imido species formed from a primary amine to have been identified and structurally characterised. While the precise nature of the reaction to form **6** is not understood, attempts to both rationalise this reaction and to produce other zinc imido species are underway.

**Table 1** Crystal refinement data for **1-6**

Compound reference	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Chemical formula	C <sub>83</sub> H <sub>84</sub> N <sub>4</sub> Si <sub>4</sub> Zn <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>14</sub> H <sub>44</sub> N <sub>8</sub> Si <sub>2</sub> Zn <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>16</sub> H <sub>48</sub> N <sub>8</sub> Si <sub>2</sub> Zn <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>62</sub> H <sub>84</sub> N <sub>4</sub> Si <sub>6</sub> Zn <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>24</sub> H <sub>74</sub> N <sub>10</sub> Si <sub>6</sub> Zn <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>36</sub> H <sub>110</sub> N <sub>18</sub> Si <sub>8</sub> Zn <sub>4</sub>
Formula Mass	1511.38	511.49	539.54	1184.61	802.21	1281.62
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Triclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic
<i>a</i> /Å	26.2840(3)	7.83400(10)	7.9730(2)	11.4310(4)	9.05200(10)	23.8580(4)
<i>b</i> /Å	9.4770(2)	10.0490(2)	18.1740(4)	11.9430(5)	21.7480(3)	18.2210(4)
<i>c</i> /Å	32.3190(4)	15.9980(3)	9.3130(2)	12.9460(5)	10.9160(2)	15.5450(3)
$\alpha$ /°	90.00	90.00	90.00	87.265(2)	90.00	90.00
$\beta$ /°	110.2770(10)	91.4860(10)	98.8530(10)	71.794(2)	101.0760(10)	100.7600(10)
$\gamma$ /°	90.00	90.00	90.00	73.697(2)	90.00	90.00
Unit cell volume/Å <sup>3</sup>	7551.5(2)	1259.00(4)	1333.39(5)	1609.86(11)	2108.93(5)	6638.9(2)
Temperature/K	150(2)	150(2)	150(2)	150(2)	150(2)	150(2)
Space group	<i>Cc</i>	<i>P21/c</i>	<i>P21/n</i>	<i>P</i> $\bar{1}$	<i>P21/c</i>	<i>C2/c</i>
No. of formula units per unit cell, <i>Z</i>	4	2	2	1	2	4
Absorption coefficient, $\mu$ /mm <sup>-1</sup>	1.365	2.015	1.907	0.896	1.337	1.612
No. of reflections measured	37195	26752	24560	29835	26367	52385
No. of independent reflections	15356	2892	3061	6615	4834	7541
<i>R</i> <sub>int</sub>	0.0594	0.0569	0.0577	0.0549	0.0430	0.0599
Final <i>R</i> <sub>i</sub> values ( <i>I</i> > 2σ( <i>I</i> ))	0.0489	0.0258	0.0273	0.0346	0.0308	0.0346
Final <i>wR</i> ( <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup> ) values ( <i>I</i> > 2σ( <i>I</i> ))	0.1097	0.0666	0.0613	0.0786	0.0737	0.0758
Final <i>R</i> <sub>i</sub> values (all data)	0.0731	0.0375	0.0393	0.0498	0.0397	0.0603
Final <i>wR</i> ( <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup> ) values (all data)	0.1294	0.0732	0.0668	0.0853	0.0775	0.0848
Goodness of fit on <i>F</i> <sup>2</sup>	1.014	1.055	1.093	1.047	1.077	1.040
CCDC number	960127	960128	960131	960129	960130	960132

Cite this: DOI: 10.1039/c0xx00000x

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## ARTICLE TYPE

## References

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